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## **Jacqueline Kahanoff and the Demise of the Levantine**

More than anything else, Jacqueline Kahanoff is associated with the term Levantinism and, more specifically, with transforming the term – which for many years had a derogatory meaning – into a positive source of identity. However, this reading of Kahanoff – namely, a carrier of the message of Levantinism as a bridge between Orient and Occident – seems to tell us more about Kahanoff's readers than about Kahanoff herself. An attentive reading of her work reveals a different Kahanoff, a person who, more than being the originator and proponent of a new kind of identity, while moving swiftly across cultures and feeling at home nowhere because her home was everywhere, was actually well entrenched in the west, in Zionism and in Israel.

Jacqueline Kahanoff is primarily associated with the term 'Levantinism', and more specifically with having transformed the term – which for many years had a derogatory meaning – into a positive source of identity. David Ohana describes her as the representative of 'cosmopolitan Levantine' and the originator of 'a Levantine model embodying a synthesis of cultures' as a reaction to what is seen by some as Israeli 'provincialism'.<sup>1</sup> Aharon Amir describes Kahanoff's Levantine identity as distinct and fertile, seeking to bring together Orient and Occident. Others describe Kahanoff's Levantinism as a 'layer of colourful Mediterranean intelligence, that cosmopolitan pluralism is its mark and soul, that openness and tolerance are its elixir, that mediation and conciliation, assimilation and fertilization are partly destiny, partly decree and order of life'.<sup>2</sup> Among the wider literature on Jacqueline Kahanoff there are also those who treat her thinking and approach to Levantinism in a nuanced manner, exploring a complex features of Kahanoff's attitude to the east, west, Levantine, and the relationships between them. Thus, Ronit Matalon uses the words 'rupture and split', suggesting that for Kahanoff 'the option to be everything frequently means to be nothing, within the Levantine context'.<sup>3</sup> Eyal Sagi Bijaoui mentions that being Levantine means 'a sense of belonging-not-belonging', and claims that 'a sense of detachment complemented Kahanoff in all the venues of her life', including Israel.<sup>4</sup> Gil Hochberg also seems to hint at this direction by including the

combination ‘Permanent Immigration’ in the title of her article on Jacqueline Kahanoff (and Ronit Matalon).<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere, Hochberg describe Levantinism as the revival ‘of the past associated with the Levant as transnational, cross-ethnic and multilingual region, shared by Jews and Arabs,’ by which through Kahanoff (and Matalon), writing is not only a past, but bears ‘continual vibrant effects as a cultural and political stance, operating within and against the current reality of separatist homogeneous nationalisms.’<sup>6</sup> Indeed, scholars are aware of the complex and multi-faceted approach of Kahanoff to Levantinism, but at the end of the day, we may conclude that there seems to be a general consensus among scholars and intellectuals that Kahanoff’s Levantinism offers an ‘identity paradigm, combining “east” with “west”: together, without putting them in contrast’.<sup>7</sup> That is, there is general agreement that Kahanoff suggests a bridge between Orient and Occident, where ideas, cultures and languages can live alongside each other with harmony.

However, this reading of Kahanoff – namely, a carrier of the message of Levantinism as a bridge between Orient and Occident – seems to tell us more about Kahanoff’s readers than about Kahanoff herself. A careful and attentive reading of her writings reveals a different Kahanoff, a person who, rather than being the originator and proponent of a new kind of identity – while moving swiftly across cultures and feeling at home nowhere because her home was everywhere – was actually well entrenched in the west, in Zionism, and in Israel. To some extent, Kahanoff embodied a great deal of what the above-mentioned scholars and writers believed she opposed. On the one hand, albeit without waving banners, Kahanoff in fact went against what was, and with time even more prominently so, the rejection of value-based judgement of culture, and against the multiculturalism that to a great extent steamrolled the differences between societies. More than that, Kahanoff in fact subscribed to what scholars later

termed 'the Zionist Enlightenment project', which sought to create a modern, liberal, western and secular society in Israel, and she suggested a way to make the Levantine part of that society. On the other hand, and again without stating so explicitly, Kahanoff challenged the very existence of a hyphenated Levant. She rejected the Levant as a source of identity, as a place people should long for and endorse. She rejected the existence of a Braudelian Mediterranean space that has its own intricacies and serves as a source of identity within it. Her Levant is not the desired bridge between Orient and Occident. In her writings she places a clear line between the two poles, and it is quite evident where her heart lies.

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Before discussing Kahanoff's Levantinism, let us examine what Levantinism is. Naturally, there is no single clear-cut definition of the Levant, the French word for 'rising'. Used in Israel as a derogatory idiom, Levant in its original sense refers to a place and space. It was the area extending from Egypt across the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to the Anatolian peninsula and Greece. Later it became a demographic marker, referring to European communities living in these areas and non-European residents who had adopted Europeanized habits and lifestyles.<sup>8</sup> This was how Fernand Braudel, the great prophet of the Mediterranean, referred to the Levant. Braudel, who explored the Mediterranean as a region whose people share geographic, economic, cultural and sociological elements, regarded the Levant simply as one of many regions within the larger human unit, the Mediterranean.<sup>9</sup> As such the Levant, Braudel assumed, had no meaning beyond its location. If it had a meaning, it was in the broader context of the Mediterranean Basin. In the same vein, another definition refers to the Levantines, who are described as

‘Europeanizing people generally involved in commerce with the North Mediterranean (i.e., Italy and France), speaking many languages, cosmopolites citizen of the colonial world’.<sup>10</sup>

Gradually the term Levantine became a definer of identity that crossed and transcended territories and borders. Levantine became a social, cultural, economic and political definer, whose bearer integrated east and west, and was above and beyond each. Thus, Tomer Levy’s focus in his study on the Jews of Beirut is on the Levant as a meeting place between people of various origins – Armenians, Greeks, Italians, and Jews – in the various port cities of the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>11</sup> The Levantines, who were minority communities, ‘turned the cities they resided in into cosmopolitan, heterogeneous, multilinguistic and multicultural’.<sup>12</sup> The Levantines belonged to neither the east nor the west, yet at the same time they were both, a meeting point where the meaning of east and west blurred and diminished. Nationality and religion had no hold over them, and ‘people switched identities as easily as they switched languages’.<sup>13</sup>

That was not Kahanoff’s Levant. She was born and raised at a time when the nation-state held sway, taking the place of the multi-national empire. Kahanoff was born in Cairo in 1917 and grew up in a solid middle-class family. Both her parents were from the Orient: her father was of Iraqi origin and her mother Tunisian. She, however, grew up in an English colonial society and was educated in a French high school. She moved to the United States at the age of twenty-three, and studied journalism at Columbia University. Five years later she returned to Cairo, only to leave again in 1949 for Paris. In 1954 she immigrated to Israel, where she remained until her death in 1979. In Cairo, Kahanoff had spoken French and English, and hardly any Arabic if at all. In the United States she wrote in English, and when she immigrated to Israel at the age of thirty-seven, she had no knowledge of Hebrew. She studied the language, but was never at home in Hebrew, and she continued writing in English and French in Israel as well. She started

publishing essays at the relatively low-circulating but highly esteemed *Keshet*. She wrote her essays in English, and the editor, Aaron Amir, translated them into Hebrew. At the same time, she was quite busy writing for several Hebrew and English newspapers and journals as a freelance journalist. She contributed, among others, to *Maariv*, *Al Hamishmar* and the magazine *At*. It was only after her death that her reputation spread beyond a limited number of acquaintances and readers who appreciated her writing.<sup>14</sup>

When she arrived in Israel, she would not have been able to echo the words of Thomas Mann from his place of exile in New York City in February 1938: ‘Where I am, there is Germany. I’m carrying my German culture with me.’<sup>15</sup> Kahanoff did not truly carry a past with her when she left Egypt and embarked on a journey that would end in Israel. Her childhood and adolescence in Egypt were characterized by the lack of a clear national identity. Her world was one of heterogeneous voices and identities, as was typical of the Levant prior to the takeover of the nation-state and religion: ‘When I was small child, it seemed natural that people understood each other although they spoke different languages, and were called different names – Greek, Moslem, Syrian, Jewish, Christian, Arab, Italian, Tunisian, Armenian.’<sup>16</sup> However, these multiple voices and identities did not form a tapestry that enriched Kahanoff. While she was growing up, exclusive ideas of identity were already threatening the heterogeneous, inclusive voices that had been dominant in the multi-national Ottoman Empire and had enabled the existence of the Levant not only as a place but also as an idea. During the 1920s particularism and exclusiveness seemed to take over. Egyptian nationalism on the one hand, and Islam on the other, gained more prominence, while for Jews, Zionism started to cast a shadow that put into question their identity in an increasingly exclusive Egypt.<sup>17</sup> More profoundly, Jacqueline’s family was not Egyptian, as her parents, like tens of thousands of Jews during the twentieth

century, had immigrated to Egypt mainly for economic reasons. There had been no more than 5,000 Jews in Egypt up to the mid-nineteenth century, after which the number rose, peaking at 75,000-80,000 in the early 1940s. During those years, Jewish life and identity shifted from the Ottoman *millet* to a more westernized model of identity. The Jews of Egypt formed part of the increasingly cosmopolitan atmosphere that swept the country, mainly following the opening of the Suez Canal and the growing British influence over the country. Kahanoff recounts how her father told her that he had left Baghdad and moved to Cairo because it was wise to leave the corrupt and arbitrarily Turkish-ruled Iraq and move to the safety of British rule in Egypt.<sup>18</sup>

As many of these Jews had come from Europe, even if southern Europe, or from major urban centres in the north-eastern Mediterranean, they also contributed to change in the general orientation of Jews in Egypt. The Jews were split into two groups, with loose links among them: the lower class, who retained their Judaism, and the upper class and well-to-do, who were more western and secular. The agent of change, and division as it happened, was the French *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU) that aimed to westernize Jews across the Levant, including Egypt, and in the process created a religious/secular divide among Egyptian Jews. The AIU, a French philanthropic institution, was founded in Paris in 1860 by a group of French Jews, with the explicit goal of educating the Jews of the Levant. Through the schools it founded across the Levant, AIU ‘wanted to instruct the so-called Oriental Jews, rescuing them from what seemed an innate laziness and backwardness’. AIU schools aspired and contributed to the reshaping of the identity of North African and Middle Eastern Jews, making them western through exposure to French republicanism, culture and values, which became their model of identity.<sup>19</sup> One outcome of the process was the increasing secularization of these Jews. Dario Miccoli tells the story of a teacher from the AIU school in Paris that these were Jews ‘only nominally’. They did not attend

synagogue, and they did not fast on the Ninth of Av, as 'they did not know what the Ninth of Av was'.<sup>20</sup> Jacqueline Kahanoff tells a similar story about Passover, and how she hardly knew anything about Judaism and the Seder. The westernism and secularization of members of Egypt's middle and upper class Jewry separated them from the poor Jews, and at a certain point, argued Kahanoff, the process reached a stage in which those Jews became more Europeans than Jews. The result was that a significant layer of the Jewish society in Arab countries drifted away not only from their Muslim neighbours, but also from their fellow Jews, the Ghetto dwellers.<sup>21</sup>

All of this means that Jacqueline did not have one definitive identity, as the following oft-cited story illustrates:

I remember one summer we were in a hotel in Alexandria, by the sea. [...] One lady asked me what I was. I did not know what to answer. I knew I was not Egyptian like the Arabs, and that it was shameful not to know what one was. And so, thinking of my grandparents, I replied that I was Jewish and Persian, believing that Baghdad, the city they came from was in the country from which all beautiful rugs came. Later, my mother chided me for not telling the truth, and said that when people asked me such a question, I should say I was European.<sup>22</sup>

This story is telling at various levels. First, it is Jacqueline's 'knowledge' that she was not Egyptian 'like the Arabs'. Kahanoff was different foremost because she hardly knew Arabic. Frantz Fanon's famous statement, now almost a cliché, still seems relevant: 'To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture.' If we want to know people, we should know their language. If the Antilles Negro wishes to be white, he (or she) 'will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is'.<sup>23</sup> Kahanoff echoes that notion in her book, *Jacob's Ladder*, when she relates how Rachel's father, David, reacted when he heard his daughter's first words,



which were in French: 'He reflected sadly that a mother-tongue is like home',<sup>24</sup> and that his daughter would communicate in a language that was not her mother-tongue, and hence, she would not be 'at home'. Indeed, Kahanoff was not at home in Egypt. She 'felt that none of the languages we spoke could express our thoughts, because none was our own. We were people without a tongue.'<sup>25</sup> Words separated Europe from Egypt, as in Egypt there were no words that could fit into the European world, or that would allow them to speak 'our own words, which we still have to invent, to do things that would resurrect all we had and was broken and would give it the outlook of completion'. But those words did not exist. She did not have them. No one told her those words.<sup>26</sup>

Kahanoff was not 'like the Arabs' also because she could not comprehend her own nationality. She knew that she should have one, but it certainly was not Egyptian: 'We felt detached from the people and land within which we resided.'<sup>27</sup> The detachment was deliberate. Her mother wanted her 'to tell the truth' and say that she was 'European'. And indeed, her mother wanted to keep Jacqueline apart from the place in which was born and grew up. Her mother cherished everything European, especially French, and sent Jacqueline to a French school that taught her and the other students 'nothing about ourselves or what we should be' as Egyptians. Instead, they studied the French Revolution and learned about *patrie, liberté, égalité*.<sup>28</sup> When Rachel – the heroine of *Jacob's Ladder* – was growing up, her mother, Alice in the book, decided to hire a British nanny. Alice's brother-in-law justified her wish during an argument with her husband, David: 'Our children must become Europeans, civilized. This is the only way to defend ourselves in a modern world. [...] We live in the twentieth century, not in Baghdad of ages ago.'<sup>29</sup> The parallel is interesting: 'Baghdad of ages ago' is contrasted not with Cairo, but with the twentieth century. That is, Alice wanted to move her daughter from the non-

modern, non-European ‘Baghdad of ages ago’, which by implication included Cairo and Egypt, to twentieth-century Europe and modernization.

Kahanoff never explained what she meant when she discussed westernism, but we can turn to a common definition of westernism at the time, to understand its meaning also for Kahanoff. Westernism, or Occidentalism, represents a cultural body of ideas and values, some of which date back to ancient times, and some of which emerged or reemerged in the eighteenth century, beginning a historical era or process termed ‘Modernization.’<sup>30</sup> Following the Renaissance, Humanism, and the Enlightenment, Europe entered a new phase in its history, with humanity placed in the centre of the universe, and science and knowledge viewed as independent of the Church or religion. The Age of Reason witnessed the rise of the individual, who was sovereign and secular, subjected only to the rule of law and no longer to the arbitrary whim of a king.<sup>31</sup> According to this (much criticized) account, those developments were part of the turn of Europe into modernity and, at the same time, became its unique feature. Allowing the development of advanced and modern science and technology led to a dramatic increase in urbanization, the level of literacy and education that encompassed all strata of society, the growth of wealth, and social mobility.<sup>32</sup> Some of the qualities that made the emergence of modern Europe possible and, in turn, became part of that modern Europe were ideas and practices that western civilization inherited from Antiquity, as Victor Hanson argued. Qualities such as ‘a sense of personal freedom, superior discipline, matchless weapons, egalitarian camaraderie, individual initiative, [and] constant tactical adaptation and flexibility’ were part of the Greek world, bequeathed to modern Europe.<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, Kahanoff was not ‘like the Arabs’ also because she was western: ‘With the increase in our westernization, our isolation in Egypt increased,’ she wrote. Elsewhere she remarked,

‘Western culture [and] education widened the gulf that separated us.’<sup>34</sup> At the heart of the divide lay the western idea of progress, which she regarded as a barrier between herself and her surroundings. ‘The progress was not only in the new commodities, comfort and nice things that one [can] purchase, like electric refrigerators and cars. It was something that changes a man from within, and maybe it was not as good as it was assumed.’ Kahanoff tried to be ‘Egyptian’ but failed because Egyptian heritage and identity were not hers, and she was not part of Egyptian society. Hers was the world of progress, which was European, and Kahanoff wanted to be part of it: ‘I wanted to be [...] an author who will find the words, our words, to tell the story of our lost time, and to find it again through the progress, not within it, but beyond its boundaries.’<sup>35</sup>

With that, Kahanoff had the same experience as many other middle class Jews. The French and British influences in Egypt were strong, and many Jews, as well as non-Jewish minorities, had adopted European culture and languages and ‘willingly underwent de-Arabization’. French was most popular, and from the end of the nineteenth century French became the language through which the Egyptian socio-economic elite communicated.<sup>36</sup> Suzi Eban (1921–2011), wife of Abba Eban, Israel’s foreign minister (1966–74), was born and raised in Egypt, and like Jacqueline Kahanoff, she describes life in Egypt, but out of it: ‘We lived indeed in Egypt, Africa, but we were an unseparated part of Europe.’ She and her siblings studied in French schools and spoke only French. Like other upper middle-class Jews (and non-Jews), Suzi Eban did not speak Arabic and had no interest in Arabic during those years. Eban tells the story of her friend, daughter of the then Egyptian prime minister, who married an Egyptian man with strong national awareness. The husband, who would serve as a minister in one of Gamal Abed al Nasser’s governments, was astonished to discover that his bride did not speak Arabic. He sent her back immediately to her parents’ home, to study Arabic.<sup>37</sup>

Kahanoff sometimes describes Cairo as a meeting point between east and west, the perfect place for the Levantine.<sup>38</sup> However, more than a meeting point, cities like Cairo and Alexandria were the place where Jews would celebrate, and of course practice, their westernism. During a wedding of Rachel/Jacqueline's relative with a man of Italian descent, the rabbi blessed the newlyweds: 'In this wedding two parts of the Jewish people united, the Padova house, deeply steeped in the western culture, and the house of Gaon, in which we see the Jewish tradition in all of its power and purity.' On its face, this is the classic encounter that creates the Levantine, the meeting point between east and west, the European and the traditional Mizrahi. But the following words of the rabbi suggest something else. It is the Europeanism of the Gaon family that matters: 'The Gaon family's encounter with Europe, as for many of us, was made by the AIU schools, and the march toward progress that these schools launched is still on its way in all Jewish communities in the East.'<sup>39</sup> The goal and the end were not to create a hybrid Jew who would emerge from the meeting between east and west. The end was to create a new Jew who would be part of Europe, modernity and progress. It is quite apparent that Kahanoff was intrigued by and interested in hybrids, in the meeting points of cultures and societies, but she came at them from an intellectual vantage point and out of curiosity as a person who experienced and moved between cultures and societies, and who, in some respect, always belonged to a clearly defined culture, if not society. She achieved this, too, when she immigrated to Israel. After settling in Israel, her interest in those moving from place to place, from identity to identity, from culture to culture, did not dissipate, but it was more of an anthropological and cultural interest than one of a participant.<sup>40</sup>

Kahanoff was first and foremost western and modern. Kahanoff's westernism is also manifested in her attitude toward British colonialism in Egypt and the Egyptian nationalist

struggle against it. She sympathized with this struggle, but wished to see the Egyptians endorsing British westernism. She did not suggest creating an Oriental-Occidental hybrid that would take what might be good in the two worlds to form a new kind of entity, Levantine. In fact, Kahanoff despised what she considered the selective and flawed manner by which Egyptians turned to the west. They did not embrace the west, accused Kahanoff, but only imitated it 'in its most superficial aspects, without making the effort to grasp the superiority on which its domination was founded'. The Egyptian rich drove 'foreign-made Buicks', while 'very blond mistresses' accompanied them. Egypt did not endorse modernity, but only took from it material benefits, such as cars and industry. Thus, 'it was no accident' that what was modern in Egypt's industry had been built by 'foreigners and members of the minorities, seldom by Moslems. For them, European civilization was too often merely something whose external trappings bestowed on them a coveted class privilege.'<sup>41</sup> It was modernity only in appearance, not in substance. Ella Shohat, for example, rejects what she describes as the 'misinformed Zionist account', according to which Oriental Jews came 'from rural societies lacking all contact with technological civilization, as if metropolises such as Alexandria, Casablanca, Baghdad, Istanbul, and Teheran were nothing but desolate backwaters without electricity or automobiles.'<sup>42</sup> However, the point that Kahanoff made is that technology does not equate with modernity. It might be a sign of modernity, and it was certainly the cause and result, and means for dissemination, of modernity. Thus, for example, the 'industrial expositions and railroad spreading across Europe and in its colonies' since the 1850s led to the dissemination of modernity across and beyond Europe.<sup>43</sup> However, Cairo, with its electricity and automobiles, was the place where 'people obeyed the old order, and accepted the good and the bad, in accordance with God's wish. In this area, women still lived in isolation in their own part of the house.'<sup>44</sup>

Thus, argued Kahanoff, Cairo had technology, but it was not really modern. Modernity, a complex term, refers to concepts of change and progress, rationalism, and purposefulness, universal norms and ‘the promise of better life’. Modernity would be ‘associated with the release of the individual from the bonds of tradition, [...] with the emergence of civil society, with political equality, with innovation and change. All these accomplishments are associated with capitalism, industrialism, secularization, urbanization and rationalization.’<sup>45</sup> These were the themes by which Kahanoff judged the prevalence – or absence – of modernity in Cairo and Egypt, and her conclusion was that Egypt was not modern. British colonialism brought technology to Egypt, and Kahanoff thought that while the Egyptians’ struggle against British colonialism was justified, they should endorse Britain’s westernism and modernity. It was through these lenses that Kahanoff viewed the Egyptian nationalists’ struggle against British rule.

Ironically, as much as she was European, Kahanoff did not feel at home in the Europe she so cherished. She lived several years in Paris, on several occasions, but was not at home there. ‘I lived in Paris,’ she recounts, ‘and to my surprise, I found out that even though my culture was mainly French, and even though I knew France, the French people were worryingly alien to me.’ Elsewhere she adds, ‘France, who gave us her language and culture, is not, and can’t be, our country. [...] We don’t want it to be our country. This nation [...] is not our nation, and even our beloved French culture, seemed in France to be disconnected from reality to such an extent that it looks like illusion.’ The place for her, concludes Jacqueline, is Israel. ‘I hope that soon enough we leave behind us the cold, the grayness, the rain, and we’ll move to live under the Mediterranean blue skies.’<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, Kahanoff was attracted to the Land of Israel, out of what was an almost intuitive and essentially primordial sense of belonging. As a young girl in

Egypt she had not been a Zionist, but she discussed her immigration to the Land of Israel as an imminent step. First she should get to know Europe, and then she would go to Israel. She had to experience Europe, and after that 'I could go to Palestine as a whole person'.<sup>47</sup>

I would like to argue that when she moved to Israel, Kahanoff finally came home. She would have to experience life in Europe, but it was in Israel where she felt 'a whole, real person'.<sup>48</sup> In her writing and observation, she was no longer looking from the outside. As she did in Egypt, she kept her critical and analytical mode of observation, seeking to bring west to the east in Israel too. However, now she did that with a deeper sense of duty and obligation. Her target now was the members of her own ethnic community, Jews of Arab origin, and her approach was one that some regard as Orientalist.<sup>49</sup> She argued that the Mizrahi suffered from an ailment typical of Muslim countries: they were lagging behind western industrial society, and they lacked the professional, technological, and spiritual education 'necessary to withstand the competition in today's world'.<sup>50</sup> Kahanoff would not ignore the east, and certainly nourished the idea of Levantinism, suggesting it as a model of coexistence. 'I'm a typical Levantine,' she wrote, 'in the sense that I appreciate in the same way what I got from my Mizrahi origin and what is now my share in the western culture.' She celebrated and appreciated what she thought was the cross-fertilization that 'is called in Israel "Levantinism"'.<sup>51</sup> But what she meant by this was that while being ethnically Mizrahi, she was culturally western. For Kahanoff, the Levantine was someone from the Orient who was flexible enough to be capable of absorbing and endorsing western ideas. 'The Levantine is the [Middle Eastern] individual who acquired that new culture, initially as something that he needed, but was external to him, and it turned gradually to something integral to his essence.'<sup>52</sup> This is not so much a mixture between Orient and Occident as the ability of the Oriental to become western. By itself, the Levantine was not good enough as a

category. If Levantinism would not take the right path of westernism, there was nothing to commend it, and more than that, it could very easily become dilettantism. Kahanoff recounts how in the philosophy classes she took in Cairo, she and the other students encountered philosophers and philosophy books that they had never read. ‘Who then read the books which had made people so famous?’ she wonders. And that was the Levantine way, she concludes: ‘This was one of the mysteries of the Levantine culture. One had only to know their names to be considered “cultivated”.’ If confined into the sphere of the Orient, the Levantine was dilettante, superficial, uneducated, one who gives more weight to appearance than to knowledge. And she compares the Levantine with the western/European: ‘Two or three years later, when I went to the Comédie Française in Paris, I was surprised to find in the audience both younger and older people who since leaving school had obviously read and reread their classics.’<sup>53</sup>

Indeed, for Kahanoff, it is the west that is associated with culture. In her essays and stories, she hardly mentions any Oriental assets that she would keep as her heritage. There is neither Arabic music nor Arab literature. She listened to western operas and discussed western literature. What is Arabic in her writing is folklore and food. ‘True,’ she wrote, ‘since the expulsion of Spanish Jewry, there is no Jewish literature in the Sephardi or Oriental communities that can compare to Yiddish in terms of creativity.’ And she explains the gap:

The Yiddish speaking communities were living in Europe [...] while the Arabic-speaking ones were far more dispersed – little islands surrounded by deserts and affected by the decline which brought most of the Middle East and North Africa under the domination of some foreign European powers.<sup>54</sup>

Not everything about the Mizrahi was negative, argued Kahanoff, a contention that led scholars to suggest that the combination of both Mizrahi and Ashkenazi qualities was the key to



creation of a Levant, where east and west would meet.<sup>55</sup> However, Kahanoff did not value east and west equally, nor suggest that the integration of both worlds and values would produce the desired Levantine. She called herself a ‘typical Levantine’, a mixture of east and west,<sup>56</sup> but her proclivity toward the latter is evident. She regarded the Levantine and the Mizrahi as emotional and irrational, while the European, the Ashkenazi, was logic and rational. This was the Levantine that Kahanoff had met in Cairo, alongside her female students, when they were trapped in a classroom full of rioting male students who locked it down. Kahanoff asked the students holding the doors closed to allow her and the other female students to leave the room, arguing, ‘It is not right to lock girls up with so many men. You wouldn’t like it to happen to your own sisters. Let us out quietly.’ The students let them leave, as they were ‘Levantine enough to know that a person, however worthless, counts more than principles, however sacred.’<sup>57</sup> In the same vein, the Mizrahi, like all traditional non-western societies, ‘enjoyed a high degree of communal cohesion, emotional support linked to ritual, a clear relationship between members of a family and their social group, all of which enveloped the individual.’<sup>58</sup>

People from the Orient should retain some of the qualities they brought with them, but these were internal, mainly emotional qualities. For everything else, and certainly when it comes to public behaviour and ideas and values, the Occident should prevail: ‘Whether people in the surrounding countries behave this way’ – ignoring public norms and modes of behaviour – ‘should not unduly concern us; it is our standards that ought to preoccupy us.’<sup>59</sup> And these standards should be Occidental. Thus, in discussing the Ashkenazi and Sephardi divide, Kahanoff does not subscribe to the traditional ethnic division, but instead upholds a divide based on an east–west axis. She attributes the problems of most Mizrahi communities in Israel to their being less westernized. As proof that the level of westernism was important in the ability of a

community to better integrate into Israel, Kahanoff cites the Iraqi community, which immigrated to Israel almost in its entirety, including its elite. They integrated better into Israel because they were western, and hence could find their way in Israel more easily.<sup>60</sup> This line of thinking and argument is in accord with the findings of Aziza Khazzoom, who has shown how the dividing line between those better integrated into Israeli society among the Mizrahi and those less integrated follows not communal and ethnic lines – namely, Mizrahi vs. Ashkenazi – but the west–east axis, that is, those westernized vs. those who were not, or were less, westernized, in their countries of origin. And the most integrated community among Mizrahi communities in Israel, according to Khazzoom, were the Iraqis, who had received a western education in Iraq.<sup>61</sup>

The Mizrahi wanted to embrace westernism, argued Kahanoff: ‘Their inferiority complex, inhibitions, their prejudices, and their misunderstanding often deprive many of them from feeling at home in Israel and making their contribution.’ At the same time, they wanted to be part of Europe and the modernization process, but they wanted to take that path as equals, as ‘brothers among brothers’. It would be impossible to impose Europe and modernity on the Mizrahi. They should to be part of the process, and they should study and explore it at their own pace. ‘They should not be seen as raw material in a designer’s hands but, rather, should be encouraged to discover and liberate themselves.’<sup>62</sup> The Mizrahi wish to westernize and are capable of doing so. The problem was that most of the Jews who came from Arab and Muslim countries arrived without their westernized elite, and hence those communities found it more difficult to adjust to the western society they met in Israel, which in addition was secular in a way they did not recognize. This gap led Israel’s westernized elite to attempt to westernize the newcomers, but in the process, the Ashkenazi misread and misinterpreted the way the Mizrahi approached the west. The Mizrahi had started their journey toward westernization through gradual endorsement of

certain aspects of the west, which the westernized Ashkenazi depicted, in a derogatory manner, as Levantine, as imitation. However, the contempt was unjustified:

It is, I think, proof of vitality when those who feel their own culture no longer serves them well [then] acquire elements of a new, more dynamic one, rather than perish, as is the case of many primitive people who do not have such resilience.

The process of acculturation entails the adoption of external, more visible, features of the new, more advanced culture. This was the first step, which would be completed only at a later stage: ‘Gradually, often over many generations, that acquaintance with the new culture develops, is internalized, and fuses with elements of the older culture to form a more workable and harmonious whole.’<sup>63</sup> And this is where the Ashkenazi and the Israeli government failed. The Mizrahi expected the state to help them become westerners. The problem was that, instead of doing so, the Mizrahi were met with prejudice and discrimination, patronization and arrogance on the part of the veteran Ashkenazi. This was the reason for the outrage and hatred of the Mizrahi toward the Ashkenazi. The Mizrahi were not alienated by the attempt to westernize them – they were ready to embrace westernism – but rather by the way the Ashkenazi acted to achieve this goal and by their attitude toward the Mizrahi. The ends were justified: wishing to integrate the Mizrahi into the western world. It was the means that failed. In the process, the Ashkenazi completely neglected Mizrahi culture and traditions, which differed from their own. Had the Ashkenazi been sensitive enough to realize that they should approach the Mizrahi with respect for their culture and traditions, the road to acculturation of the Mizrahi to westernism would have been much smoother:

For those who must undergo cultural transition to adapt to the modern world – in cultural as well as economic terms – these margins of freedom and self-expression become ever-increasingly important as their lifestyles and aspirations approach those of the dominant group.<sup>64</sup>

Kahanoff envisioned Israel as an Occidental state even before its establishment. She visited Palestine for the first time in 1937. At the time she drew a comparison between the order and cleanliness of Jewish settlements and the dirt and neglect of Arab villages, between the Jewish energy and initiative and the Arab apathy.<sup>65</sup> Her impression of the Palestinian Arabs remained the same thirty years later, when she visited the Old City of Jerusalem following the 1967 war. After a very brief fascination with ‘the smells, sights and voices that were so similar to what I have known in the ancient parts, within the walls of Cairo,’ came the disillusionment. ‘With all the beauty and character of Jerusalem, the human side of it was not romantic, exotic or picturesque, but simply poor, backward, decayed.’<sup>66</sup> One cannot avoid comparing this description with Mark Twain’s portrayal of the people of the Orient: ‘filthy, brutish, ignorant, unprogressive, superstitious.’<sup>67</sup> Kahanoff did not find herself among these people, who reminded her of the past she had left behind: ‘I wasn’t, and I did not want to be, part of this world, but a modern person who belongs to his century.’ And this century was that of France and Britain, which, while maintaining the relics of their past, such as Notre Dame and Westminster Abbey, moved forward, to build a world fit for our times. Even Israel had made the shift from agrarian to industrial economy, while the vision she found in the Arab part of Jerusalem was of a world frozen in the past. The relics and ancient artefacts she saw at the Rockefeller Museum were not a past of modern times, but a reflection of a past frozen in time. ‘You can’t simultaneously have social organization from the Bronze era and live in a modern society that can compete in the world as it is today,’ she commented with respect to what she saw in the Arab territories

occupied by Israel in 1967.<sup>68</sup> In the status of their women, Kahanoff found living evidence among the Arabs of a society frozen in time. As in the society of her childhood, the Arab women of East Jerusalem ‘looked at the same time so familiar and so distant, these shadowy women, silent, secretive, as if absent from the world’. These women represented ‘an ancient world that stubbornly maintains its existence’, and at the same time they were looking at Israel as a symbol of ‘the revolutionary power of modernity’.<sup>69</sup>

This critical view of the state of Arab society as it was reflected through the status of its women is yet more evidence of Kahanoff’s westernism, not only because she sees the situation of these women as symbolic of Arab backwardness, but also because her view illustrates Kahanoff’s feminism. It originated in Egypt, where she spoke strongly in favour of women’s rights to their bodies, cherishing their right to be independent. She speaks fondly of her female friend in Cairo, who ‘stretched her big, well-built body and exclaimed, “I wish I had the guts to be a cabaret dancer, naked between two fans. We all behave like whores anyway once we’re married”.’ Next she tells the story of a married assistant professor who wanted to wed one of her friends. The friend’s parents strongly opposed the relationship between their daughter and the married professor, but the daughter insisted on maintaining relations with him. ‘She became a heroine,’ recounts Jacqueline, ‘because she did not give up her man, and her name was the rallying cry of a generation of young women who wished to be masters of their own bodies as they saw fit.’ She and her friends stood fiercely against the young men who criticized the woman: ‘The system is all to your advantage, but we won’t stand for it anymore!’<sup>70</sup>

Kahanoff reiterated her feminist position in Israel. She was impressed by the sight of the shorter skirts of young female Arab Palestinians from East Jerusalem: ‘It probably means, maybe, that the women grew tired of the old dresses, of the old rules, or that men could no longer

impose upon them their wish so easily. The shortened skirt was perhaps a sign of cultural change.<sup>71</sup> Scholars were disturbed by the implied Orientalism that Kahanoff demonstrated here, and refused to accept the observation at face value.<sup>72</sup> However, as if responding to such an attempt, Kahanoff was not worried by the implied assumption that she was seeking to impose her western cultural and societal values on the Arab girls. On the contrary, this was exactly her aim. When asked about it by a journalist, she responded, 'Intellectual leftists who defend the right of every nation to freedom and self-determination quite often end up protecting the most backward and oppressive societies.' Quite the opposite, she claimed, it is 'reactionary to retain backward male imperialism over the female half of humanity'.<sup>73</sup> For Kahanoff, feminism was part of her western identity, which should prevail and be applied as much as possible. That is, Kahanoff rejected the connection made by post-colonialist theoreticians who associated the unveiling of women with colonial penetration. 'The desire to penetrate behind the veil,' argues Myra Macdonald, was 'characterized by a desire to master, control, and reshape the body of the subjects by making them visible.'<sup>74</sup> Kahanoff wished to see Palestinian women baring their thighs and refused to adhere to cultural relativism and non-judgementalism. She consciously refused to accept the alternative of endorsing a neutral point of view based on political correctness and moral relativism. She thought that leaving things as they were, and not acting to impose what she considered as superior values and culture on an inferior society, was reactionary. She insisted that Arab society should change, and the change should not come despite the price that it might exact from Arabs, who would have to undergo painful social and cultural transformations. It should come precisely because the present situation was unacceptable and cost dearly for the underprivileged members of Arab society, mostly women. They, along

with the rest of the Arab society, stayed behind, subject to anachronistic and oppressive regimes, politically and spiritually.

But there is more than pure feminism in Kahanoff's assertion that 'intellectual leftists who defend the right of every nation to freedom and self-determination quite often end up protecting the most backward and oppressive societies.' This assertion summarizes also Kahanoff's thinking about east and west, and about the meaning of Levantinism. With this statement, Kahanoff takes a clear stance in favour of the 'Enlightenment project'. She was convinced that the ideas and values of the west are better than those of the non-western, mainly Muslim, world, and that people deserve freedom as this term is understood and applied in the west. While rejecting imperialism, she strongly advocates endorsement of the concepts of human rights and humanity that the imperialists upheld and brought with them to the colonized. She denounces 'leftist intellectuals' who fought racially prejudiced views and 'justly' emphasized ideas of racial equality and relative cultural values while in the process idealizing primitive cultures and hurting the very people who suffered the consequences of the anti-colonialist struggle. She does not hesitate to use the words 'backward' and 'primitive' when referring to the people and reality of the Arab-Muslim world, and she rejects the 'sentiment of guilt that gave momentum to decolonization'. These sentiments only created illusions among the decolonized, leading them to think that once the colonizers had gone, all their problems would be resolved. That, of course, did not happen. They remained in the past, instead of moving ahead and making progress – progress that, all in all, colonialism carried with it.<sup>75</sup>

Kahanoff was not a post-colonialist. Post-colonialism is not only about removing the burden of imperialism and liberating the people from the yoke of colonialism. Post-colonialism is about changing the power relations between colonialists and the colonized. The physical termination of

the colonialist presence would not necessarily put an end to these power relations. Even without actually being present, colonialists would retain their power and sway over the colonized through the continuing impact that colonialist ideas, values and ideology would have on the – now formerly – colonized.<sup>76</sup> This was not Kahanoff's intention. She did not seek to change the profound power relations between the colonized – Egypt in particular, but also all Muslim countries – and the colonizer, the European. Nor was Kahanoff in favour of the hybrid or mimicry as forms of association between colonized and colonizers. Kahanoff did not articulate her ideas through the notion that there were mutual relations between colonized and colonizer, or that such relations should exist, as so commonly held in post-colonial literature.<sup>77</sup> While she wanted to see the end of the British occupation of Egypt, for her independent Egypt should retain and adhere to European civilization and culture. Kahanoff cherished the heritage of colonialism and gave the Levantine a special role in it. Kahanoff's Levantine is one where the Oriental meets the Occidental and endorses the latter's values and culture. The Levantines 'mostly [...] were from the Mediterranean, and their views and culture were more European than Arab,'<sup>78</sup> she claims. It started early – 'At the height of its influence, Islam was a Levantine empire, as it was shaped by the civilized influence of Byzantium over the Arab conqueror'<sup>79</sup> – and continued over time. During the initial phases of the encounter between the Oriental and the colonialist, the former was impressed by the technological advantage of the latter and imitated his technology and values, while feeling ashamed of his own culture and values. With time, the local indigenous elite absorbed the values of the colonizer and became more western in orientation. It grew more self-confident, and gradually learned to integrate the new western values within its own. The Levantine did not seek to create a hybrid, an intercultural society that would draw from both Oriental and Occidental cultures. Rather, his mission was to turn his Oriental, backward society



into an advanced, modern, western society.<sup>80</sup> The Levantine did not seek to serve as a bridge between east and west, but ‘to transform a traditional culture that is no longer capable of solving new problems and needs, which was characteristic of Levantine culture’. The Levantine’s goal was to create a liberal democratic state and ‘to transform the Levant into a more open and free society that could develop for the benefit of all its people’.<sup>81</sup> The local elite also immersed itself in the culture of the colonizer. In the process, it studied the language of resistance and freedom from the colonizer and became more aware and critical of the shortcomings and flaws that were part of the colonizer’s western culture – not so much in substance, as in the way the colonizer did not live up to his values, such as Christianity, human rights, and liberty. All these factors led the local elite to rise up against the colonizer and seek national independence. However, when the nation achieved independence, the local elite – in Kahanoff’s case, Egyptian, in Albert Memmi’s, Tunisian – would not continue pursuing western values. Instead, they would reclaim their past heritage. The nationalist was ‘caught up by idealization’ of the past. ‘The Arab nationalist, for example, even though he was more Levantine and he tended to become even more Levantine, was caught up to the idealization of Islam, or of the Pharaonic grandiosity.’<sup>82</sup> With that, the Egyptian nationalists turned their back on the only path that could save them. ‘The end of the [British] colonial occupation solved nothing fundamental unless western concepts were at work in this awakening world, transforming its very soul.’ Europe ‘was inseparably part of us, because it had so much to offer.’ Alas, the Egyptian students, to whom Kahanoff was speaking, would not accept her suggestions. Their ‘radically different attitudes toward Europe and toward our conception of the future made the parting of our ways inevitable.’<sup>83</sup>

Thus, Kahanoff’s Levantinism was not a meeting point between Orient and Occident. Her Levant always had a strong western component to it. That is, what mattered most to Kahanoff

was not the quintessential qualities of the people coming from the Orient. She cared more about the place of progress in these societies, and the way in which the Mizrahi would find their place within the more advanced and more progressive society. It was essential, she wrote, to close the gap between the more advanced and technologically oriented component of society and those 'unadapted, marginal sub-proletariat, separated from the dominant stream' by 'lack of opportunities to adapt to [this] new kind of post-industrial civilization'.<sup>84</sup>

In other words, Kahanoff supported the attachment of Zionism to the Enlightenment project, even if she did not make direct or indirect reference to it. One aspect of the Zionist movement was the wish of its ideologists to bring Jews back to the mainstream of western civilization. It did so by cutting links with its rabbinic past, turning instead to secularism, and by calling for the creation of a Jewish, Hebrew culture and nationalism that would be western and liberal in orientation. Another important component of the Zionist Enlightenment project was the assumption that 'the new would be better than the old', and that the new era would be characterized by constant progress from the present to the future.<sup>85</sup> Kahanoff subscribed to this very perception in her attitude toward Europe, the west and Zionism, as well as to the notion of progress and secularism that came out of the enlightenment. This is evident in her praise for the French authors and intellectuals Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, and even more so for the poet and intellectual Charles Peguy for his passion to socialism and nationalism, as well as his dedication to secularism (even when he re-embraced Catholicism).<sup>86</sup>

There is one area where Kahanoff did cherish the hyphen and the hybrid, and this is in the fields of literature and culture. Here she sympathizes with the struggle of authors with their identity. She praises the search for identity by authors who refused to be subjected to a 'narrow definition'. These authors, naturally, come from the periphery and were exposed to the west and

subjected to colonialism. 'They are trying to overcome the conflicts they are subjected to in order to achieve some autonomy and to merge the forces that shaped them, without giving up on any of the ingredients comprising their divided personality.' They are not Levantines, as they are not engaged in 'imitating western paradigms, but in finding themselves'. They have no inclination to be part of the hegemony: 'And to the question, "who are you?" they answer, "I'm the combination of A, B, and C and I refuse to give up any of these elements".' Thus, she refers to V.S. Naipaul, the Trinidadian author of Indian origin, claiming that his national identity was 'stolen' from him, making him an uprooted author, a 'mutation'. The author of Indian origin Santha Rama Rau is 'representative of a new person who feels comfortable in many places without fully belonging to any place'.<sup>87</sup> She analysed Albert Memmi in the same manner, suggesting that 'he was torn between three dimensions of his internal world: the Jewish, the Arabic and the French.'<sup>88</sup>

It is quite evident that Jacqueline Kahanoff was intrigued by and interested in hybrids, in the meeting points of cultures and societies, but this was the intellectual curiosity of a person who experienced and moved between different cultures and societies, although she always belonged to a definite culture, albeit not to a society. Even after settling in Israel, her interest in those moving from place to place, from identity to identity, from culture to culture, did not dissipate. But this was more an anthropological and cultural interest than that of a participant. Politically, socially and culturally, Jacqueline Kahanoff did not propose a vision of Levantine society that would integrate east and west. She was western and liberal in her vision and outlook, and she cherished modernity even if she was aware of its hazards and risks. She proposed a clear set of values, which was western. She sought and suggested a movement, physical and spiritual, from east to west, and Israel was west for her.

This portrayal of Jacqueline Kahanoff aims not only to do justice to her vision and work; it also aims to challenge the premises authors have associated with Kahanoff, the Levantinism. It aims to revisit the question: even if Kahanoff did not suggest one, is there a Levant to which Israel should turn? Is there a hyphenated, hybrid place of which Israel should be part? On a broader level, is there a Mediterranean entity that encompass all those along its shores, standing by itself, blurring distinct differences to create a multiple unity, as implied by Fernand Braudel on the one hand, and by the proponents of the Levantine idea on the other? Jacqueline Kahanoff had an answer: this might have existed in the past, but not anymore. And indeed, the idea of the Levant, in its Braudelian sense, is strongly associated with a time and place. The Levant as a ‘mentality’ could be what it was within the open space of a multi-national and multi-religious empire in decline. The peaceful co-existence of people of various nationalities and religions and the free movement of goods as well as ideas were possible because the Ottoman Empire was not bound by a single idea, be it religion or nationality. By its very multi-national structure, the Ottoman Empire was tolerant toward people of different beliefs and associations. It gave shelter to Jews escaping persecution in Christian Europe, while serving as home to the Orthodox Church. The growing political power of the great powers – Great Britain, France, and Russia – during the nineteenth century, which corresponded with the diminishing power of the central government, made it even easier for people of various nationalities and beliefs to collaborate and engage in cultural, economic, and political exchanges. The next phase in the approach to the Levant is the rise of nationalism and the growing hold of religion. These were the enemies of Levantinism, and they brought about its demise as an idea. ‘The nation-state is the prison of the mind,’ and ‘the Levant was a jail break.’<sup>89</sup> Historically, though, it was the other way around: first came the Levant, ‘the jail break’, and then came the nation-state, ‘the prison of the mind’.<sup>90</sup> The

nation-state abolished the multi-national, multi-cultural entities in which hyphenated and hybrid identities could exist. The rise of nationalism and the nation-state across the Mediterranean Basin turned that region into particles, units among which the divide is stronger than any unifying factors. Agreements such as the Barcelona Process, which created the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), might be able to bring its signatories together to work jointly on political, security, economic, and cultural issues. However, the agreement and its related activities are all based on the nation-states that created it, and it does not replace them.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ohana, 'Jacqueline Kahanoff', 9–10.

<sup>2</sup> Amir, 'From the Dawn of Sun to Dusk', 7. See also Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs*, 27, 119; Calderon, *Multiculturalism*, 68; Rejwan, *Outsider in the Promised Land*, 68–9; Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, xii–xiii, xxii–xxvi.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Sagi Bijaoui, 'Introduction', 27 and 31 respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Sagi Bijaoui, 'Introduction', 32.

<sup>5</sup> Hochberg, 'Permanent Immigration'.

<sup>6</sup> Hochberg, *Inspite of Partition*, 45.

<sup>7</sup> Sagi Bijaoui, 'Introduction', 23. See also Shiff, 'Between Minor and Major', 125, 130–5.

<sup>8</sup> Miccoli, *Histories of the Jews of Egypt*, 7–8.

<sup>9</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, 120–1, 127, 132, 134 and more. Braudel treats the Levant the same way in the second volume of his *magnum opus*.

<sup>10</sup> Carlino, 'The Levant', 2.

<sup>11</sup> Levi, *Jews of Beirut*, 5. See also Editor's Note, *Journal of Levantine Studies*, Vol. 1 (Summer 2011), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Sagi Bijaoui, 'Introduction', 7–8. See also Mansel, *Levant*, 1–2.

<sup>13</sup> Mansel, *Levant*, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ohana, 'Jacqueline Kahanoff', 9–12; Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, xiv, xx–xxi.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Goebel and Weigel, *Escape to Life*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Gershoni and Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs*, 270–4.

<sup>18</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 60–2.

<sup>19</sup> Miccoli, *Histories of the Jews of Egypt*, 21–20. The AIU operated in Egypt only briefly, from the 1980s to the 1910s (ibid., 23). However, the Jews in Egypt sent their children to other secular schools that also had a strong French influence.

<sup>20</sup> Miccoli, *Histories of the Jews of Egypt*, 24–33. See also Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 61.

<sup>21</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 51–2.



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- <sup>22</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 4.
- <sup>23</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 38.
- <sup>24</sup> Kahanoff, *Jacob's Ladder*, 63.
- <sup>25</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 8.
- <sup>26</sup> Kahanoff, *Between Two Worlds*, 57–61.
- <sup>27</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 17–8.
- <sup>28</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 8.
- <sup>29</sup> Kahanoff, *Jacob's Ladder*, 160.
- <sup>30</sup> Goldstone (1998), 249. The modern era is not to be confused with Modernism, though: 573–621.
- <sup>31</sup> Merriman (2010), 56–8, 298–312, 313; Seth (2007), 305.
- <sup>32</sup> Hanson (2001), 29.
- <sup>33</sup> Hanson (2001), 3.
- <sup>34</sup> Kahanoff, *Between Two Worlds*, 35; Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 100. See also Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, xxiii, xxv.
- <sup>35</sup> Kahanoff, *Between Two Worlds*, 57–61.
- <sup>36</sup> Beinín, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry*, 50.
- <sup>37</sup> Suzi Eban, *A Sense of Europe: Recollections* (Or Yehuda: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, 2009), 19–21, 77–80. See also Said, 1999, 22–23, 75.
- <sup>38</sup> Kahanoff, *Jacob's ladder*, 58.
- <sup>39</sup> Kahanoff, *Jacob's Ladder*, 174.
- <sup>40</sup> The 'Literature of Social Mutation' in *Between Two Worlds*, 109–19 is a good example of Kahanoff's external point of view and analysis.
- <sup>41</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 106–7.
- <sup>42</sup> Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 153.
- <sup>43</sup> Goldstone, 'The Problem with the 'Early Modern' World', 250.
- <sup>44</sup> Kahanoff, *Jacob's Ladder*, 56.
- <sup>45</sup> Misa, Brey, and Feenberg, *Modernity and Technology*, 5, 7.
- <sup>46</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 81, 104.
- <sup>47</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 110.
- <sup>48</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 31.
- <sup>49</sup> Rosen, 'Between Two Ladies', 239.
- <sup>50</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 193–4.
- <sup>51</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 48.
- <sup>52</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 50.
- <sup>53</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 101–2.

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- <sup>54</sup> Kahanoff, 'What About Levantinization?', 20.
- <sup>55</sup> Shiff, 'Between Minor and Major', 126.
- <sup>56</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 195.
- <sup>57</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 106.
- <sup>58</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 196.
- <sup>59</sup> Kahanoff, 'What About Levantinization?', 17.
- <sup>60</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 66. See also Kahanoff, 'What About Levantinization?', 19.
- <sup>61</sup> Khazzoom, *Shifting Boundaries and Inequalities in Israel*, 127–61.
- <sup>62</sup> *Between Two Worlds*, 154.
- <sup>63</sup> *From East the Sun*, 52, 64–65; Kahanoff, 'What About Levantinization?', 14–5. See also Ben Simon, *The Moroccans*, 24.
- <sup>64</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 54–5, 58.
- <sup>65</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 149.
- <sup>66</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 68.
- <sup>67</sup> Twain, *The Innocent Abroad*, 63.
- <sup>68</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 68–9.
- <sup>69</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 69–70.
- <sup>70</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 110–1.
- <sup>71</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 74.
- <sup>72</sup> Benkhabib, 'Women's Skirts are Shorter Now', 689–90.
- <sup>73</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 74.
- <sup>74</sup> Macdonald, 'Muslim Women and the Veil', 9.
- <sup>75</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 75.
- <sup>76</sup> Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 16; Parsons and Harding, 'Post-Colonial Theory and Action Research', 2. Sagi Bijaoui categorizes Kahanoff's thinking as post-colonialist: Sagi Bijaoui, 'Introduction', 49.
- <sup>77</sup> The best-known articulator of colonizer/colonized relations is of course Homi Bhabha, who presented the idea of mimicry and hybridity as conceptual tools to describe those relations. Bhabha, it should be noted, was not speaking simply about mutual colonizer/colonized relations, but more about how the colonized, through the mimicry of the colonizer, explore the hollowness of the colonizer's world, culture and values. See Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 121–31.
- <sup>78</sup> Kahanoff, *Between Two Worlds*, 38.
- <sup>79</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 48, 58.
- <sup>80</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 49–50.
- <sup>81</sup> Kahanoff, 'What About Levantinization?', 21.
- <sup>82</sup> Kahanoff, *From East the Sun*, 50–1. See also *ibid.*, 70–2; Memmi, *Jews and Arabs*, 40–4.

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<sup>83</sup> Starr and Somekh, *Mongrels or Marvels*, 107.

<sup>84</sup> Kahanoff, 'What About Levantinization?', 21–2.

<sup>85</sup> Caron, 'The Ambivalent Legacy', 515–6; Meyer, 'Thoughts on Jewish Modernization', 31.

<sup>86</sup> Kahanoff, *Between Two Worlds*, 231–42.

<sup>87</sup> Kahanoff, *Between Two Worlds*, 110–1.

<sup>88</sup> Kahanoff, *Between Two Worlds*, 113.

<sup>89</sup> Braude and Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, 1; Mansel, *Levant*, 3–4; Mansel, 'Cities of the Levant, 220–1. The quotations are from *ibid.*, 224.

<sup>90</sup> See Schwara, 'Rediscovering the Levant'.

<sup>91</sup> The prime rationales for the existence of the UfM are strategic and economic, and are based on nation-states and the relations between them: Reiterer, 'From the (French) Mediterranean Union to the (European) Barcelona Process', 313–36.